

Peter Boghossian- From Classical Liberal to NatCon Activist

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Executive Summary



Peter Boghossian is an American philosopher whose public trajectory reflects a dramatic ideological shift from liberal advocacy to national conservative activism. Originally known for his work on critical thinking, secular ethics, and the Socratic method, Boghossian built his early career on Enlightenment liberal ideals—reasoned discourse, individual rights, and institutional neutrality. His reputation grew through projects like the Grievance Studies affair, a controversial hoax targeting progressive academic disciplines, which marked the beginning of his move away from classical liberalism toward culture war confrontation. In subsequent years, Boghossian deepened his alignment with right-wing populist movements, both in rhetoric and institutional affiliation. He publicly attacked entire academic disciplines as corrupt, forged close ties with Orbán-aligned institutions in Hungary and Romania, and adopted increasingly antagonistic positions on transgender rights, often echoing themes common to far-right discourse. He now serves as executive director of the National Progress Alliance, a nonprofit media outlet funded by national conservative activist Christopher Rufo’s network and focused on race, education, and gender identity as core battlegrounds in the culture war. In 2024, Boghossian endorsed the Manhattan Statement on Higher Education—a manifesto that rejects procedural liberalism in favor of state-imposed ideological compliance in universities. His YouTube channel has become a key node in the Alternative Influence Network, where content blends libertarian rhetoric with hard-edged illiberalism, amplifying conservative grievances and steering audiences toward a politics of cultural restoration. Through these channels, Boghossian has positioned himself not merely as a critic of liberal excess, but as a committed participant in a transatlantic campaign to dismantle and replace liberal institutions with ideologically aligned alternatives.

Philosophical Origins and Early Work

Peter Boghossian is an American philosopher and educator who spent nearly a decade teaching at Portland State University before emerging as a prominent public critic of ideological orthodoxy in academia and as a transatlantic bridge in the [Global National Conservative Alliance](#). Trained in philosophy of education, Boghossian initially gained recognition for his work on critical thinking, secular ethics, and techniques for navigating difficult conversations. A self-described advocate of Enlightenment values, Boghossian became a familiar figure in heterodox intellectual circles, frequently appearing on platforms promoting free speech and skepticism of identity politics. Over time, however, his career shifted from classroom instruction and dialogue based outreach toward activism, institutional disruption, and alignment with a growing network of anti-woke and national conservative figures. Boghossian has long presented himself as a classical liberal—an advocate of reasoned discourse, individual rights, and institutional neutrality. His early work emphasized free speech, critical thinking, and the Socratic method, aligning him with Enlightenment liberal values. But over the past several years, Boghossian's methods and affiliations have steadily diverged from classical liberalism and now reflect a post-liberal, national conservative orientation grounded in institutional confrontation and cultural restoration.

The Grievance Studies Hoax and Methodological Rupture

Boghossian's ideological break with classical liberalism first became unmistakably visible during the Grievance Studies affair (2017–2018), when he, along with James Lindsay and Helen Pluckrose, submitted 20 deliberately fabricated academic papers to peer-reviewed journals in fields such as gender studies, critical race theory, and fat studies. The papers included intentionally absurd claims—for example, that male students should be trained like dogs to stop rape culture, or that urban dog parks are sites of canine sexual assault reinforcing human rape culture. Seven papers were accepted or published before the project was exposed. Though framed as a defense of academic rigor, the hoax relied on deception, violating norms of transparency and scholarly ethics. Portland State University's Institutional Review Board later found Boghossian had conducted human-subjects research without approval, using editors and peer reviewers as unknowing participants. The project also revealed ideological selectivity: it targeted only progressive fields and offered no comparative analysis of publication standards in other disciplines. While classical liberalism calls for even-handed, methodologically sound critique, the hoax was designed to ridicule and discredit, not to persuade. In tone and execution, it resembled the tactics of culture war provocateurs more than those of liberal reformers. Boghossian's broader pattern of bypassing institutional norms while denouncing them as corrupted further illustrates his shift away from procedural liberalism toward a politics of disruption.

Right-Wing Rhetoric and the Populist Turn

The combative tone and ideological targeting of the hoax foreshadowed Boghossian's growing rhetorical alignment with the populist right—an alignment made explicit in a 2019 interview with the German far-right publication *Junge Freiheit*. In the interview, Boghossian delivered a sweeping indictment of progressive academia that went well beyond methodological critique. He portrayed entire disciplines—such as gender studies, fat studies, and anti-racism research—as intellectually vacuous and morally corrupt, describing them as vehicles for “idea laundering,” where political agendas are disguised as science. He likened their methods to those of a pseudo-religion, complete with virtue signaling, original sin in the form of privilege, and blasphemy codes enforced through political correctness. Far from distancing himself from the publication's ideological framing, Boghossian echoed its populist tone, expressing solidarity with “ordinary citizens” who are only now awakening to what he sees as elite deception. He showed no discomfort with *Junge Freiheit*'s antileft positioning and reinforced it by portraying progressivism as not just misguided but authoritarian and socially corrosive. While he claimed that his criticism was politically neutral, his rhetoric—targeting moral authoritarianism, institutional capture, and cultural subversion—aligned closely with the worldview of national

conservatism. The result is a portrait of someone no longer merely critiquing the excesses of his own side, but increasingly speaking from within the value system of its opponents.

Alliance with Christian Nationalists

By 2019, Peter Boghossian had also deepened his association with Christian nationalist figure Michael O’Fallon, founder of Sovereign Nations, a platform promoting far-right theological and political views. Despite previously describing religion as a “psychiatric delusion,” Boghossian began appearing in interviews and conferences hosted by Sovereign Nations, portraying conservative Christians as allies in what he termed “Culture War 2.0.” He framed this alliance not around theology, but shared commitment to “objective truth” and opposition to intersectional ideologies. [Public records show that Boghossian was listed as a manager of New Discourses LLC, a company registered to O’Fallon and co-managed by James Lindsay](#), further solidifying their collaboration. O’Fallon’s platform has promoted conspiracy theories such as the “Great Reset” and espouses a Calvinist-inflected Christian nationalism aimed at reasserting traditionalist authority across theology, civil society, and education. Boghossian’s partnership with O’Fallon marked a dramatic turn: from radical atheist to institutional partner of a religious nationalist movement.

Institutional Embedment in the National Con Infrastructure

That ideological sympathy soon translated into institutional alliances, as Boghossian increasingly embedded himself within the global infrastructure of national conservatism. He is a founding faculty member at the University of Austin, a project that claims to defend free speech but is increasingly shaped by conservative donors and culture-war imperatives, and close to the national conservative Hungarian government. Internationally, Boghossian has developed his own [close ties with Orbán-aligned institutions such as Hungary’s Mathias Corvinus Collegium \(MCC\) and the Danube Institute](#)—pillars of the country’s illiberal strategy to position Central Europe as a stronghold against progressive social norms. Boghossian has [publicly praised Hungary’s resistance to “wokeness,”](#) appearing on sympathetic platforms to endorse its cultural direction. His activities extend to Romania, where his lectures [amplify right-wing critiques of U.S. cultural influence and echo themes common to Russian-backed disinformation campaigns](#), particularly those targeting LGBTQ rights and liberal democracy.

The National Progress Alliance and Dark-Money Ties

Boghossian’s institutional alignment with the national conservative movement is further underscored by his leadership of the National Progress Alliance, a nonprofit where he serves as executive director. The organization describes its mission as restoring “free speech and open inquiry as non-partisan values” and exposing “the implications of a far-left ideological takeover.” Tax records reviewed by *The Intercept* reveal that the Alliance is primarily funded by the Documentary Foundation, a right-wing entity closely tied to national conservative activist [Christopher Rufo](#). Much like Rufo’s own media efforts, the Alliance’s output centers on race, transgender health care, and education—core fronts in the broader culture war. Boghossian’s role at the helm of this organization, which is sustained by donor-advised funds and conservative foundations, places him not merely adjacent to but actively embedded within a well-financed campaign to remake public discourse and institutional norms along post-liberal, national conservative lines.

Anti-Trans Advocacy and Public Engagement

Boghossian’s alignment with the populist right has also been evident in his recent repeated interventions on transgender issues, where he has adopted a confrontational posture more typical of culture war polemicists than liberal skeptics. Framing gender identity as a form of ideological delusion, he has dismissed the legitimacy of trans identities in public talks and social media posts, often invoking “biological reality” as a rhetorical

cudgel rather than engaging with the complexities of gender theory or lived experience. He has amplified voices from the anti-trans movement and repeatedly cast trans-affirming policies in education and medicine as threats to reason and truth. While couched in the language of concern for children or scientific integrity, his interventions frequently mirror talking points promoted by national conservative and far-right actors seeking to roll back LGBTQ rights more broadly. This shift from reasoned critique to activist positioning on trans issues further underscores his departure from the liberal ethos of open inquiry and pluralism.

The Manhattan Statement and Illiberal Institutional Vision

The culmination of Boghossian's ideological turn came this week when [Boghossian endorsed the Manhattan Statement on Higher Education](#)—a document unveiled by Christopher Rufo that formalized his departure from procedural liberalism in favor of state-enforced ideological alignment. The statement calls for universities to adopt a rigid ideological framework—abolishing DEI offices, enforcing mandated “neutrality,” and tying public funding to compliance. Though framed as a defense of truth and academic freedom, the statement reflects a broader illiberal project: to use state mechanisms to remake institutions in a national conservative image. In practice, Boghossian now embraces the national conservative thesis that liberal institutions are not merely flawed but captured and beyond reform. This outlook abandons the classical liberal commitment to dialogue and procedural neutrality in favor of strategic replacement—constructing ideologically aligned institutions, leveraging power, and recasting liberal norms as obstacles to be overcome. What remains is the rhetorical shell of Enlightenment liberalism, used to legitimize a campaign of ideological control and cultural consolidation.

Alternative Influence and YouTube Strategy

This campaign is on full display at Boghossian's YouTube channel (@drpeterboghossian), a hub for content aligned with national conservative discourse. Videos often feature sharp critiques of “woke ideology,” gender theory, and institutional overreach—topics that resonate deeply within the Alternative Influence Network, a cluster of right-wing thinkers and pundits connected via YouTube's algorithmic pipeline. His content—ranging from live discussions to critiques of educational and social norms—follows a pattern seen across similar channels, where themes like race, transgender health care, and education form cultural flashpoints designed to mobilize conservative audiences and steer them toward more hardline positions. This makes his channel a powerful vector for ideological amplification within the broader national conservative ecosystem.

External References:

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- [How a Free-Speech University Sidles Up to Orbán's Strongman Rule](#)
- [National Progress Alliance | About](#)
- [Christopher Rufo's Nonprofit Has Become a Hub for Dark Money](#)
- [Peter Boghossian | YouTube](#)
- [YouTube's secret life as an engine for right-wing radicalization](#)

